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~~Confidential~~*The FBIS story*

Listening to the World for 50 Years

David Shank

On 26 February 1991, the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), the US Government organization that monitors foreign radios and other media, celebrated its 50th anniversary. While small and little known to the public, FBIS is a venerable institution to foreign affairs specialists in Washington. Intelligence analysts and policymakers depend on FBIS for textual reports concerning developments in foreign lands, ranging from war communiques and reports on acts of terrorism to peace initiatives and speeches by political leaders. With its ears always cocked toward foreign transmitters, FBIS often has been the first to tell official Washington about an important development abroad.

The Director of Central Intelligence and several of his predecessors paid tribute to the service on its golden anniversary. DCI William H. Webster hosted a ceremony and told FBIS employees he was one of their "principal consumers." Richard M. Helms wrote that "no other entity of the United States Government has contributed so much timely information to so many people in this country as has the FBIS." He recalled that in 1967 FBIS provided Washington with the first word of the start of the Six-Day War. Admiral Stansfield Turner wrote that "FBIS has to be one of the most unheralded, but valuable resources in our government." And President Bush stated in a congratulatory message that FBIS employees "perform a vital service" in providing information needed to respond to the ever-changing global political climate.

One example of this service occurred in 1962, during the Cuban missile crisis. FBIS flashed to the White House and other government offices the

Soviet decision to dismantle the missile bases, citing a message from Nikita Khrushchev to President Kennedy broadcast in Russian by Moscow Radio. The Soviets, to make sure the message reached the White House as quickly as possible, had simultaneously dispatched it through diplomatic channels and broadcast it over the radio. The radio route proved to be faster, and President Kennedy responded at once to the message delivered by FBIS.

How It Began

President Franklin D. Roosevelt determined the FBIS anniversary date when, on 25 February 1941, he allotted \$150,000 from his emergency fund to the Federal Communications Commission for monitoring foreign radios. He told the Secretary of the Treasury, who transferred the money the following day, that it was "for the employment of persons and means at the seat of Government and elsewhere for recording, translating, transcribing and analyzing certain radiobroadcast programs."

Radiobroadcasting technology had developed rapidly in the 1930s. Shortwave transmissions from powerful new stations could be heard over great distances. For the first time, the human voice could be transmitted over border defenses and into private homes. Nazi ideologues and other propagandists in Europe and elsewhere were quick to exploit this new tool of persuasion, and a "war of the airwaves" ensued.

In the US, academic interest in radio led to the establishment in Princeton, New Jersey, of the

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first facility to monitor and study foreign broadcasts systematically. The Princeton Listening Center, which was financed by the Rockefeller Foundation, began recording and translating a limited number of foreign propaganda broadcasts in November 1939, three months after the BBC inaugurated a monitoring service in England. Social scientists began studying broadcasts from Berlin, Rome, London, and elsewhere in an effort to discern the goals of the originators, their techniques of persuasion, and the role of radio in international politics. A smaller facility was established in 1940 at Stanford University in California to listen to trans-Pacific broadcasts.

The monitoring reports of the Princeton center contributed to a growing concern in Washington over the content of foreign broadcasts, especially the appeals by contending powers in Europe for the minds of American listeners. There also was concern about the large amount of foreign programming beamed to the Americas that was not systematically monitored. Were belligerent powers speaking directly to ethnic groups in the US and neighboring countries? If so, what were they saying?

A Monitoring Program

Toward the end of 1940, the Department of State recommended to President Roosevelt that the US Government monitor such foreign broadcasts. Roosevelt referred the proposal to the Defense Communications Board, which took up the question at a meeting on 3 January 1941. The Department of State's representative on the board, Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, argued that the US was confronted with an aggressive and often subversive foreign broadcasting system and that it needed to establish its own monitoring facilities.

The board endorsed the monitoring proposal on 13 January 1941. It asked the Federal Communications Commission to devise a plan for monitoring foreign broadcasts. The FCC monitored domestic radio frequencies as part of its regulatory activities, and it had performed limited monitoring of foreign frequencies. The FCC's plan called

for expansion of its own monitoring capabilities. Unlike Great Britain, the US had no national radiobroadcasting apparatus to which a monitoring service could be appended. The government also had no centralized information-gathering agency. On 21 January, the board approved a formal request to the President recommending the FCC plan and requesting the allotment of funds to the FCC.

The New Service

With the initial funding, the FCC began establishing the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS) to monitor foreign broadcasts. To assemble a staff and get the service into operation, the FCC hired the director of the Princeton Listening Center, Harold N. Graves, Jr., as senior administrative officer.

When the 26-year-old Graves arrived in Washington, an FCC official told him the monitoring service was being established "so that when we get into the war, we would be prepared," he recalled years later. "He didn't say 'if we get into the war,' he said 'when we get into the war,' which made a terrific impression on me," Graves remembered.

Graves organized the service into translating, reporting, and analytical components, supported by FCC radio engineers. FBMS headquarters was established in a converted warehouse just east of Union Station in Washington, D.C. Radio engineers at an FCC antenna facility in nearby Laurel, Maryland, recorded foreign radio programs on wax cylinders and sent them to FBMS. As translators were hired, they were put to work on the recordings; in a few months a sizable collection of transcripts was on hand. Editors and analysts also were hired and began work on the accumulated material, first producing a publication on German broadcasts to North America. In June 1941, a former CBS correspondent in Europe, Thomas Grandin, was hired to head the reports section.

Also in June, the FCC hired the first director of FBMS. He was Lloyd A. Free, a 1930 graduate of Princeton, former California lawyer, and editor of

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Public Opinion Quarterly at Princeton. Free was interested in radio and public opinion matters. He was familiar with the pioneering monitoring being done at Princeton and Stanford and in England.

FBIS DIRECTORS

Lloyd A. Free 1941-1942	Paul A. Borel 1969-1972
Robert D. Leigh 1942-1944	E. H. Knoche 1972-1973
Charles S. Hyneman 1944-1945	Don H. Peterson 1973-1980
Russell M. Shepherd 1945-1947	John F. Pereira 1980-1983
Lawrence K. White 1947-1950	John D. Chandlee 1983-1986
Alan M. Warfield 1950-1956	Harrison S. Markham, Jr. 1986
Roger G. Seely 1956-1968	Robert W. Manners 1986-1991
	Wayne R. Schreiner 1991-

With the support of FCC Chairman James L. Fly, Free and Graves moved quickly to get the monitoring service into operation amid ominous signs of approaching war. Many believed that if the US became involved in the war, the monitoring of enemy broadcasts would be more important to Washington than ever. Monitoring also would provide one of the few means of getting information rapidly from regions disrupted by hostilities.

In early July 1941, the FCC's station at Kingsville, Texas, began recording broadcasts to and from Latin America and airmailing them to FBMS headquarters for transcription. In the same month, headquarters employees began publishing a series of spot bulletins, summarizing Axis propaganda campaigns. Free recalled that "I started out arranging that every important government person

in terms of the war-to-be would get a copy of our stuff."

In August, the service was in full operation. Its spot bulletins were replaced by a new publication, *Foreign Broadcasts: Highlights of* (date). The engineering staff at Laurel moved to Silver Hill, Maryland, from which monitored programs would be relayed over telephone lines to FBMS headquarters. A Washington newspaper reported that the service had "a wonderful collection of personalities in its employ—ranging from White Russian princes to Americans who have written librettos for Japanese operas, newsmen who beat the Nazis out of Paris by a day to academically trained psychologists."

A milestone was reached on 1 October 1941, when the first FBMS monitoring facility outside the Washington, D.C., area was established in a farmhouse on the outskirts of Portland, Oregon. It was the first of numerous field bureaus, and it would monitor Japanese and other Far Eastern broadcasts and send the translations to FBMS headquarters in Washington by teletype.

On 31 October, headquarters inaugurated a teletype service to the Washington and New York offices of the newly established Coordinator of Information, headed by Colonel William J. Donovan. The COI, later renamed the Office of War Information (OWI), was developing the US counterpropaganda capability and needed fast reporting. A wire service to the Department of State was set up the following month.

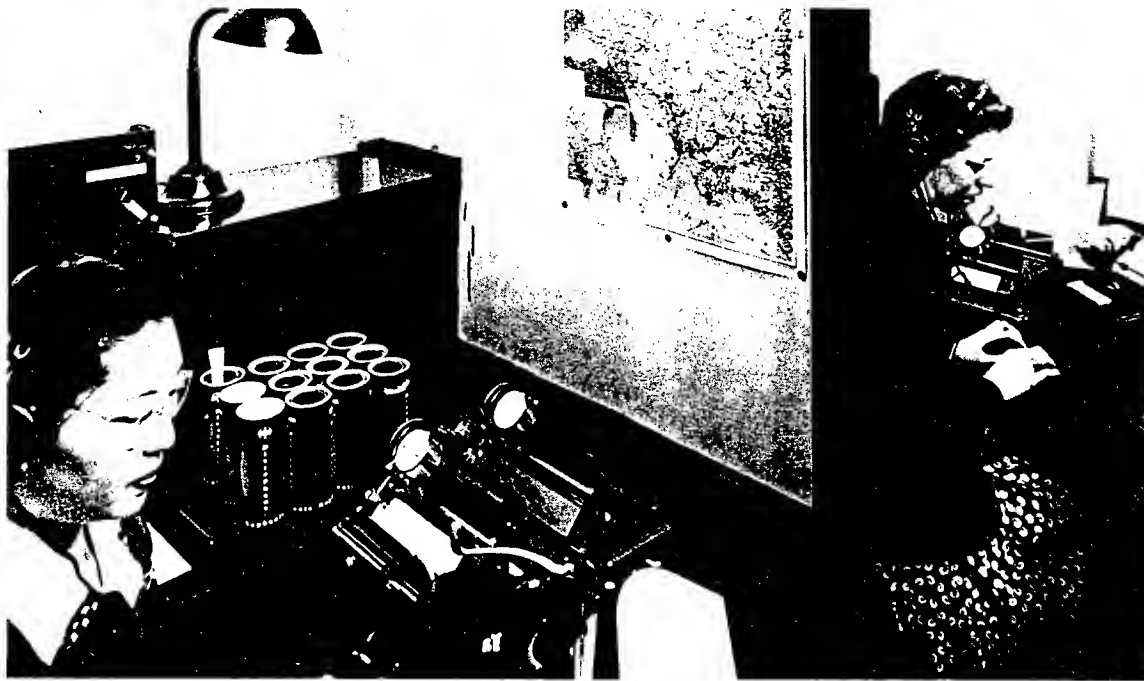
On 17 November, Dr. Goodwin Watson, a social psychologist from Columbia University, became the first chief of the analysis section. The following day saw the first regular issuance of the *Daily Report*, the service's primary publication that continues to this day in eight geographic volumes. By the end of November 1941, the FBMS staff numbered 215.

Monitoring Process

The job of radio monitoring was organized into a multistep process performed by specialists. The

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Monitors at FBIS Portland Bureau during World War II.

same basic process is followed today. Radio engineers and other technicians use antennas and receivers to pull foreign broadcasts from the airwaves and recorders to preserve them for later processing. Most monitoring is done according to a predetermined "coverage schedule" listing each broadcast station and program along with time and frequency. The coverage schedule differentiates between media sources that have to be covered live, those that have to be covered from recordings within 24 hours, and several other categories. The technicians also have to be prepared to receive and record announcements of military coups and other broadcast surprises.

Another technical task involves "cruising," sitting with headphones on and systematically scanning the broadcast frequencies for changes in previously established programming patterns. Newly discovered public affairs programs are listened to on a trial basis. If they appear to contain useful information, they probably will be added to the coverage schedule. Cruising surveys are also conducted to determine sites for new bureaus to fill coverage gaps.

In the early years of the service, the FCC provided radio technicians from its other components. Today, FBIS has its own technical personnel who, because of the increasing sophistication of equipment, are responsible for a more complex range of hardware.

After a program has been collected, a radio monitor takes over. Monitors are hired for their foreign language and translating skills and knowledge of foreign countries. A monitor listens to each program on the coverage schedule and prepares a summary in English of its contents by "items," the individual news reports, commentaries, and other segments that make up the program. From a typical 30-minute newscast, only a few items containing information of known or presumed interest to US Government consumers will be selected for full translation. Initially, monitors were required to be American citizens; they worked only in the US, although many had lived overseas. Today, most FBIS radio monitors are foreign nationals, and they work at

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overseas monitoring sites, typically referred to as bureaus, under the supervision of American staff editors.

Monitors pass their program summaries and translations to editors for the next stage in the process. One editor usually handles the output of a number of monitors covering broadcasts from a number of countries. Based on his or her familiarity with consumer requirements, the editor selects items for translation and edits, ranks, and categorizes translations for distribution over electronic networks or in published reports. Initially, experienced journalists were recruited as editors. Today, new FBIS editors come from a variety of university liberal arts programs, including journalism.

Somewhat to the side of this production line, a small number of media analysts carefully reads the material from certain countries. They prepare analytical reports on aspects of foreign developments of interest to Washington that appear new or significant. Initially, most were social scientists from academia who followed Axis propaganda techniques. Today, most new analysts have university training in area studies or political science, and they mainly write on political trends in a country or region.

Disseminating Information

The former newsmen who first managed the service set up an information dissemination system resembling newspapers and wire services. Urgent information was sent by teletype over telephone lines to printers in consumer offices. More routine information was disseminated in the *Daily Report* and other publications for government consumers. Later, after most of the monitoring product was produced at field bureaus and sent to Washington by teletype, the bureaus on request began sending copies of the information to field facilities of other US Government agencies. These "lateral consumers" included US embassies, military commands, and Washington officials on overseas negotiation missions. The bulk of FBIS production is still disseminated by these basic means, using computerized information-handling equipment.

World War II

In December 1941, a small FBMS monitoring post was established at Santurce, Puerto Rico, the first facility outside the continental US. At the same time, an FBMS monitoring bureau was established in Kingsville, Texas. On 6 December, the first issue of the publication *Weekly Analysis* noted that Tokyo broadcasts had become "hostile and defiant."

On 7 December 1941, FBMS became a "war agency" and the reporting of foreign developments related to World War II became its primary mission. The wire to the State Department went on 24-hour service; it soon was supplying an average of 25,000 words a day to 18 defense offices.

FBMS Director Free was in London when the US entered World War II. His mission was to work out details of a reciprocal arrangement with the two-year-old BBC Monitoring Service. He wanted to obtain British-monitored European programs that were unmonitorable in the US because they were broadcast on medium-wave frequencies. In return, he would supply the British with FBMS-monitored broadcasts from the Far East and elsewhere that the BBC could not hear. Both sides appeared agreeable to the exchange as a way of getting more information at little cost. With the US entry into the war, the "special relationship" between Washington and London would include the sharing of monitored radio broadcasts of other countries. FBMS field operations began immediately at the US Embassy in London, using monitored material sent by the BBC from its monitoring station at Evesham.

As the war progressed, a number of other field facilities were opened as a result of changing conditions. In 1942, the service, under a new director, Dr. Robert D. Leigh, and renamed Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, took over the operation of a monitoring station in San Francisco previously operated by CBS. It was given up after a new bureau in Hawaii provided superior reception of Japanese and other Far Eastern broadcasts. FBIS radio monitors and editors followed US military forces island-hopping westward toward

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Japan. A monitoring station was opened on Guam in January 1945 and one on Iwo Jima in August. Following the occupation of Japan, a small bureau was opened in Tokyo in 1946.

During the war years, there was much to monitor as the contending nations used radio to support their positions. Describing the situation in 1944, Dr. Leigh said:

Around the world at this hour and every hour of the 24 there is a constant battle on the ether waves for the possession of man's thoughts, emotions, and attitudes—influencing his will to fight, to stop fighting, to work hard, to stop working, and to resist and sabotage, to doubt, to grumble, to stand fast in faith and loyalty.

At its peak during World War II, FBIS had about 520 employees. Its wartime headquarters was at 1424 K Street, NW, a few blocks northeast of the White House. FBIS publications and customized teletype lines went to specialists at State, OWI, OSS, Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Board of Economic Warfare, War Department, Army, Navy, and other governmental offices, and to Allied governments.

The working relationship was particularly close with OWI, which, by agreement, released much FBIS-monitored war news to the public. In 1944, OWI assumed most of the work of analyzing foreign propaganda, while FBIS concentrated most of its resources on monitoring. The two organizations also maintained a joint editorial office in London during the war.

By tacit understanding, FBIS handled voice broadcasts from foreign radio stations, but did not monitor military and other nonpublic radios. The US military monitored enemy military communications, and a separate component of the FCC, the Radio Intelligence Division, maintained watch for Axis spy radios.

Uses of Material

In March 1942, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, said:

Every phase of the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service's work has been of great assistance to us. The speedy transmission of monitors' reports over the teletypes is particularly helpful. The analysis of certain shortwave programs from the other American republics has proven useful in the writing of stories which our office then relays to various press agencies and radio stations. The *Daily Report* provides us with general and specific insights into Axis strategy, not only for the other American republics, but also for this country as well as for the rest of the world. The weekly *Analysis* gives us a perspective on what has been occurring from day to day.

And William J. Donovan called FBIS reporting an "invaluable service."

While FBIS workers grew accustomed to such praise from consumers, they often were somewhat in the dark about how their information wound up being used. "Very few of us can see the whole of our production process from beginning to end," Director Leigh told employees in 1942. "None of us sees, except occasionally, what happens to our product when it leaves our shop and arrives in the confidential or secret war agencies who use it." Leigh did say, however, that he knew of one case in which "a news item from a station in the morning had by mid-afternoon saved military equipment of more value than the money required to maintain FBIS for a year, and as surely saved dozens of lives."

In the summer of 1944, the third FBIS director, Dr. Charles S. Hyneman, said:

We get an abundance of testimony to the great and strategic value of our material. More than once we were told that what we

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FBIS Guam Post, World War II.

get from the air about internal conditions in Japan is just about all that anyone in Washington knows on the subject. We certainly get the impression that if our service were to be cut off, planning for both the European and Far East campaigns would be enormously handicapped.

FBIS sometimes also directly contributed to US military activities. From Guam in 1945, for example, FBIS closely monitored the Japanese domestic radio service for broadcast alerts to air raids and all-clear announcements, for the immediate information of 20th Air Force personnel in charge of the missions.

Postwar Restructuring

For a time late in 1945, it appeared that, because of a cut in the FCC budget, FBIS might be abolished, even though the Department of State and other official consumers said they would still need its information in peacetime. The war years had shown that monitoring was one of the fastest and cheapest ways of collecting a large volume of information on developments in and among foreign countries.

The Washington press, which had become familiar with FBIS reporting through OWI releases during the war, joined other proponents of retaining the

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BBC Monitoring Service headquarters at Caversham, west of London; 1953.

monitoring capability in peacetime. "The FBIS made notable contributions to our understanding of events and trends abroad during the war and would constitute a vital part of the comprehensive intelligence organization which we ought to have in peace," the *Washington Post* editorialized.

As a temporary measure, the War Department agreed to take over the service from the FCC until a permanent home could be found for it. In succeeding months, as Washington moved to reorganize the US intelligence effort on a peacetime basis, FBIS was transferred in mid-1946 to the new Central Intelligence Group, where it was renamed the Foreign Broadcast Information Service. FBIS became a founding component of the CIA when the latter was established in September 1947. The National Security Council on 12 December 1947 issued what is known as the "FBIS Charter" in the postwar intelligence structure. Its Intelligence Directive No. 6 directed the Director of Central Intelligence to "conduct all Federal monitoring of foreign propaganda and press broadcasts required for the collection of intelligence information to meet the needs of all Departments and agencies in connection with National Security." It also directed the DCI to "disseminate

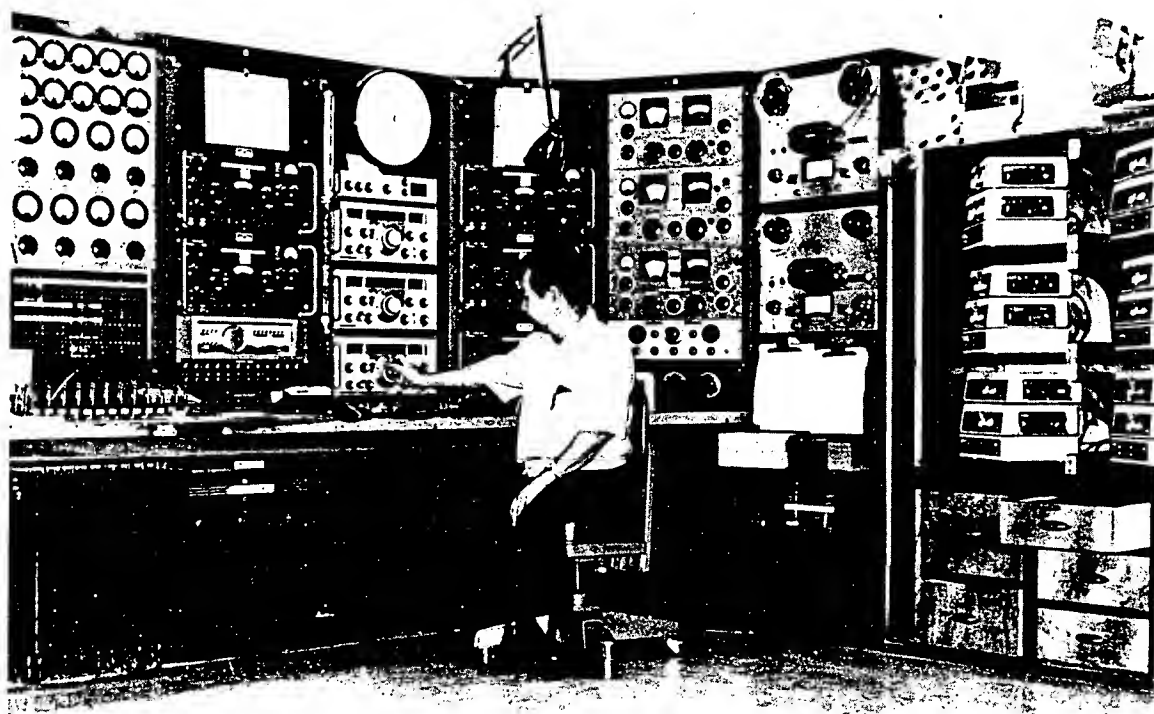
such intelligence information to the various Departments and Agencies which have an authorized interest therein." Subsequent authorizations covered the monitoring of foreign television and publications.

From 1947 to 1965, FBIS was a component of CIA's Office of Operations, which, starting in 1952, was an office in the Directorate of Intelligence. In 1976, in an exchange involving several offices, FBIS was transferred from the Directorate of Intelligence to the Directorate of Science and Technology.

With its postwar mission assigned, FBIS began positioning itself to serve as Washington's ears in the era characterized by the development of the Cold War with the Soviet Union and its satellites and clients, by the spread of communism on the Asian mainland, by the Arab-Israeli conflict, and by the decline of colonialism.

One of the first steps was to formalize the US-UK relationship, which had lasted through the war years on the basis of the gentlemen's understanding of 1941. After extensive negotiations, the two monitoring services agreed to work for maximum

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Technician at now-defunct FBIS Mediterranean Bureau.

coordination and minimum duplication in monitoring world radios, while sharing products. The DCI approved the FBIS-BBC coordination plans in 1948. The London Bureau of FBIS, collocated since 1943 with the British service at suburban Caversham, remained in place to edit and relay to Washington BBC-monitored material from the Soviet Union, Europe, and North and East Africa.

FBIS in turn supplied the British with material from East Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, West Africa, and other countries. Adjustments in the relationship would be made at annual meetings of the heads of the two services, alternating between Caversham and Washington.

The FBIS-BBC relationship has endured because of the considerable economic advantages of cooperation, a common language, and a generally similar political outlook on world events. FBIS officers attribute occasional strains to BBC pecuniary

plights, profit-mindedness, high public profile, and a unionized work force. Washington authorities sometimes question US dependence on a foreign service for coverage of most Soviet broadcasts, while in the UK the BBC's involvement with a CIA component is sometimes questioned.

Field Bureau Deployment

FBIS monitoring in the postwar years was concentrated at two overseas sites and two domestic sites. To monitor developments in the Middle East and adjacent areas, FBIS in early 1949 opened "Medburo," a major listening facility in the eastern Mediterranean on the north coast of Cyprus. It replaced a bureau in Cairo that FBIS had taken over at the end of the war from the British Ministry of Information. With the Cairo facility, FBIS had inherited numerous foreign nationals who worked for the British. In the postwar era, an

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increasing amount of the monitoring would be done in foreign countries by foreign national employees.

In 1949, a major bureau was built on Okinawa to monitor developments in China and other Asian countries. Because it was closer to the transmitters, it had better reception than the monitoring station in Hawaii, which was shut down. The existing post in Tokyo was retained and supplemented in 1952 by a small facility on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido to monitor North Asian and Soviet regional broadcasts.

The two domestic field facilities monitored foreign shortwave broadcasts and trained personnel bound for overseas bureaus. Each also was considered a "fallback" site for overseas facilities, an important factor to many Washington managers in the Cold War years.

On the west coast, the facility established in Oregon in 1941 was succeeded by two in California—first at Reseda in 1948 and next at Santa Rosa in 1954. The West Coast Bureau was closed in 1970, by which time other bureaus had taken over coverage of most of its assigned stations.

An East Coast Bureau was opened in 1949, a few miles down the Potomac from the District of Columbia. It replaced the World War II antenna facility at nearby Silver Hill, Maryland. East Coast Bureau closed in 1968, after transferring its coverage responsibilities to a new bureau in Puerto Rico. The new bureau was expected to be the best-ever monitoring facility, partly because it incorporated a "wire grid-lens antenna," which resembled a spider web of wire suspended over and around the bureau operations building. But radio reception was disappointing, and the bureau was closed in 1973. Its coverage of South and Central America was taken over by two smaller facilities, a new bureau in Paraguay and one in Panama dating from 1962. An even smaller bureau covered Cuban broadcasts from Key West, Florida, where it was established in 1960.

Other small bureaus were opened to keep an ear on regional developments that could not be monitored from Cyprus and Okinawa. These included

facilities in Austria and West Germany in 1949, South Vietnam in 1951, Nigeria in 1961, and Thailand in 1967. Of these, only the bureaus in Austria and Thailand remain open in 1991.

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Overseas Setbacks

In the mid-1970s, a series of abrupt political and military developments overseas resulted in the loss of several established FBIS monitoring sites, requiring an arduous realignment of coverage facilities. The first casualty was Mediterranean Bureau on Cyprus. On 20 July 1974, the bureau was caught in the fighting during the Turkish invasion of the northern part of the island. There were no serious injuries to personnel, who were evacuated by helicopter to a British ship three days later. The building, however, was damaged and abandoned. Because no other single site could be found that could duplicate the lost bureau's coverage, FBIS decided to set up a number of "minibureaus" that together could cover the Middle East. Within weeks, minibureaus were established in Tel Aviv, Athens, and Beirut.

In 1975, a new bureau in Amman, Jordan, replaced the Beirut unit, and FBIS returned to Cyprus with a new bureau in Nicosia. The Athens unit closed in 1981, leaving the minibureaus in Tel Aviv, Amman, and Nicosia to cover the region formerly covered by Mediterranean Bureau. Between 1979 and 1986, a bureau in Bahrain was devoted to coverage of Iranian media. US concern over the Soviet move into Afghanistan led in 1980 to the establishment in Islamabad, Pakistan, of a technical unit to monitor Afghan and regional Soviet radios. The monitored programs are relayed to the BBC in Caversham for translation.

The second abrupt closing took place in South Vietnam on 29 April 1975, as communist forces

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approached Saigon. Staff employees at Saigon Bureau smashed their monitoring equipment and were evacuated. Bangkok Bureau, established in 1967 partly as a fallback position for Saigon Bureau, assumed coverage of Vietnamese radios.

The third closing involved African Bureau in Kaduna, Nigeria. Since 1961, it had monitored the radios of West and Central African countries. It closed on 2 April 1976, after being ordered to do so by the Nigerian Government, which was reacting to press outcries over the FBIS connection with CIA and the US policy on the war in Angola. The closing left FBIS with no presence in Africa. Efforts to reestablish coverage of African broadcasts finally resulted in the opening of Abidjan Bureau in Ivory Coast in 1979 and Swaziland Bureau in 1982.

The loss of Mediterranean Bureau in 1974 brought home to FBIS managers the risk of concentrating coverage in a single bureau situated in an unsettled region. They looked at Okinawa Bureau, the largest overseas FBIS facility, and the pressure to which it occasionally was subjected by leftist Japanese politicians and media. As a precaution, they decided to establish, in advance of a possible closure of Okinawa Bureau, small bureaus in Hong Kong and South Korea, while retaining the option of opening a third site on Guam. Hong Kong Bureau became operational early in 1976, and the following year it took over the BBC's Far East Unit and the US Consulate General's Press Monitoring Unit, both experienced in reporting on developments in China. Seoul Bureau also was opened in 1976. As part of this realignment in the Far East, Hokkaido Unit was closed in 1976.

The loss of three bureaus due to circumstances beyond US control led to consideration of a different approach to monitoring as the era of communications satellites developed. A study was made to determine whether radio transmissions could be collected overseas and then relayed by satellite to a central translation and processing facility in the US. The conclusion in 1977 was that the approach seemed technically possible, but at the time there were too few satellite channels available to carry the high volume of programming FBIS was monitoring. Moreover, old hands believed that FBIS

could not find and hire in the US monitors with the language skill and firsthand area knowledge of its overseas corps of foreign nationals.

At about the same time, FBIS was transferred from CIA's Directorate of Intelligence to its Directorate of Science and Technology. Many FBIS editors, analysts, and linguists initially felt a little out of place among the engineers and technicians of the DS&T, but they recognized that the DS&T was in a better position to apply the "dose of technology" FBIS was perceived as needing.

Expanded Media Coverage

Initially, FBIS monitored the only medium that in 1941 appeared to be a threat, the foreign short-wave radios that broadcast propaganda audible in the US. Later, by establishing overseas facilities closer to foreign transmitters, the service added to coverage shorter range, mediumwave radiobroadcasts generally intended for non-US audiences. Foreign press agencies, which also used radio frequencies to disseminate information, were added to coverage in the quest for war news of interest to Washington.

In 1967, FBIS acquired by merger with CIA's Foreign Documents Division responsibility for coverage of foreign publications. Although FBIS field bureaus had done some reporting from the local press, the bulk of foreign publications scrutiny was performed in Washington by FDD language officers, who also provided foreign-language support to other CIA components. FDD, about the same size as FBIS, traced its roots back to the Washington Documents Center, which was set up in February 1945 as an Army-Navy clearing station and evaluation board for captured enemy documents from the Far East. Early in 1946, the center absorbed two other organizations engaged in exploitation of captured enemy documents, the Pacific Military Intelligence Research Service and Op-32F141. The Office of Naval Operations managed the center until late 1946, when it was made part of CIG and renamed. Like FBIS, FDD became a charter member of CIA in 1947, first as a branch then as a division.

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A study in 1967 recommended merging FBIS and FDD into a single media-monitoring service. FDD was transferred to FBIS and renamed Production Group. It retained responsibility for the scrutiny of publications received at Headquarters, while FBIS field bureaus increased their coverage of locally available publications. Much of FDD's material was published by an off-site subsidiary, the Joint Publications Research Service.

JPRS was established in 1957 to contract for the services of freelance translators, enabling FDD to expand its translation capability without hiring more staff linguists. FDD staff officers, familiar with CIA guidelines for the collection of information, selected responsive articles from the foreign press and forwarded them to JPRS for assignment to translators and for publication. To mask its role in the selection of JPRS-published material, which was available to the public through the Department of Commerce, CIA did not acknowledge its connection with JPRS. After JPRS became a component of FBIS, the service favored disclosure of the CIA-JPRS affiliation, which finally was acknowledged in 1974. In 1974, FBIS also made available for public sale, again through the Department of Commerce, all eight regional volumes of its *Daily Report*.

TV gradually was accepted as a source of FBIS reporting as it evolved from an experimental medium of entertainment to a popular medium of mass communication. TV monitoring involved several problems: the signal was monitorable only within a radius of some dozens of miles from the transmitter, compared to hundreds or thousands of miles for radio transmissions; FBIS lacked technical familiarity with video equipment, the specifications of which differed according to country; and consumers were ambiguous in defining their needs.

Initial video monitoring involved taking still photographs of foreign military hardware and the use of bulky reel-to-reel recorders by technicians to videotape occasional documentary programs. By the 1980s, the regular monitoring of selected foreign TV news and public affairs programs was

facilitated by the availability of programs on communications satellites, which greatly increased the areas in which they could be monitored, and by the introduction of cassette videotapes and lightweight recorder/players. In 1985, FBIS began relaying the intercepted signal of Moscow TV to CIA Headquarters for viewing by analysts.

Using a similar capability, in 1982 FBIS started monitoring Soviet press facsimile transmissions, used to send mockups of next-day Moscow newspapers to regional printing plants. By translating articles from the "pressfax" transmissions, FBIS provides Washington analysts with front-page information before it is publicly available in the Soviet capital.

The proliferation of small computers in the early 1980s led to the development in a number of foreign countries of electronic data bases on subjects of intelligence interest. Production Group of FBIS took the lead in surveying and exploiting these electronic sources of information. Small Science and Technology Units were set up in Japan, Belgium, and Italy, where, as paying customers of the electronic services, they extracted information on foreign technological advances. They also collected at regional trade shows and conferences technological and commercial brochures, research papers, and other publications, internally referred to as "gray literature." Unlike the information furnished by most FBIS sources, this specialized material usually was not intended for the general public, but was openly collectable.

By this time, the expanded scope of FBIS collection made the service the primary supplier of "open source" information to the Intelligence Community.

Technical Modernization

An internal study in 1981 pointed out that FBIS was still handling information much as it had done in World War II. Information received from the field by teletype, for example, was still being edited by pencil before being retyped for publication. FBIS was years behind newspapers and other

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processors of large volumes of information in switching to computers. As a result, FBIS was authorized to undertake a multiyear technical modernization program. This involved replacing typewriters with computers for information handling, the monitoring of foreign broadcasts from communications satellites, and a communications system capable of relaying monitored TV programs from Europe to Washington.

Even with more modern equipment, FBIS struggles to keep up with the rising volume of media information available worldwide. More information than ever before is publicly available because of geopolitical changes favoring the free flow of information and technical advances fostering information services and communications. FBIS consumers, with their information appetites whetted by innovative commercial services available on home TV sets and personal computers, expect their government service to keep pace. They want information delivered to them electronically. They also want to see more live TV from world crisis spots, as well as FBIS-produced video compilations on selected subjects.

In 1941, a limited number of officials in Washington's small foreign affairs community wanted monitored information on foreign political and military developments and analysis of the propaganda reaching American ears. In 1991, a far greater number of consumers also want information on terrorism, narcotics trafficking, trade and economic competitiveness issues, the spread of chemical and nuclear weapons, threats to the environment, and many other topics. Their expressed needs produce pressure on FBIS to provide more information from more sources. FBIS is responding by making increased use of computers in translating, disseminating, and storing information and by establishing by the end of 1991 its first monitoring facility in Eastern Europe. Thus, as it marks 50 years of service, FBIS is characterized by continuing change as it strives to meet official Washington's requirements for information.

This article is classified CONFIDENTIAL.

Other Articles in *Studies in Intelligence* About FBIS

"The BBC Monitoring Service and Its U. S. Partner," by (b)(3)(c) Vol. 2, No. 3, Summer 1958. (C)

"Scooping the Soviet Press," by John D. Chandlee, Vol. 6, No. 1. Winter 1962. (C)

"The Last Days of the FBIS Mediterranean Bureau," by (b)(3)(c) Vol. 18, No. 4, Winter 1974. (S)

"Soviet Television: A New Asset for Kremlin Watchers," by (b)(3)(c) Vol. 29, No. 1, Spring 1985. (C)

"A Rite of Passage in Tokyo," by (b)(3)(c) Vol. 31, No. 2, Summer 1987. (S)

"The Brzezinski Initiative: FBIS and the Muslim World," by John D. Chandlee. Vol. 31, No. 3, Fall 1987. (S)

"High-Intensity Annoyance," by (b)(3)(c) and Douglas Naquin. Vol. 34, No. 1, Spring 1990. (C)

"Veni, Vidi, Vid-int," by Maureen Cote. Vol. 34, No. 3, Fall 1990. (U)

Current FBIS Monitoring

(b)(1)
(b)(3)(n)

Confidential

50 Years

*Products and Services**Consumers*

- 24-Hour Headquarters Wire Service (55,000 words daily)

Some 50 US Government offices, including White House; CIA; Pentagon; Department of State; DIA; USIA; VOA; Library of Congress; Customs; Treasury; and Energy.

- Wirefiled Field Reports (300,000 words daily)

600 US Government addressees, including diplomatic posts, military bases, negotiators, plus selected friendly governments.

- *Daily Report* and Other Regional and Topical Publications (200 million words annually)

25,000 copies go to official consumers; 4,000 other copies go to subscribers via National Technical Information Service.

(b)(1)

(b)(3)(c)

- Media Analysis Reports

US Government offices receive 1,000 copies; NTIS subscribers receive 150 copies after a six-month delay.

- TV Video

CIA analysts see selected foreign telecasts live; other official consumers get videotapes on request.

- Translation Index

US Government offices.

FBIS Milestones

- 1941 Following President Roosevelt's allotment of initial funding, FCC establishes Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service at 316 F Street, NE, in District of Columbia; *Daily Report* and wire service inaugurated; propaganda analysis begun; first field bureaus opened; cooperation with British initiated.

- 1942 Headquarters moves to 1424 K Street, NW; name changed to Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service.
- 1945 Following cut in FCC's postwar funding, FBIS personnel transferred to War Department.
- 1946 FBIS transferred from War Department to new Central Intelligence Group, Office of Operations, and renamed Foreign Broadcast Information Service.
- 1947 Headquarters moves to former Briggs School at 22d and E Streets, NW; with establishment of CIA, FBIS becomes a component; National Security Council Intelligence Directive 6, "FBIS Charter," issued to CIA.
- 1948 FBIS-BBC Monitoring Service reciprocal monitoring arrangement replaces wartime gentlemen's agreement on monitoring cooperation.
- 1949 Headquarters moves to South Building, 2430 E Street, NW.
- 1950 Headquarters moves to Quarters I temporary structure on Ohio Drive, south of Lincoln Memorial.
- 1952 Office of Operations, including FBIS, is transferred to CIA's new Directorate of Intelligence.
- 1954 FBIS is authorized to monitor foreign TV broadcasts.
- 1956 Headquarters moves to 1717 H Street, NW.
- 1965 Headquarters moves to 1200 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va., and is elevated from division to office status upon disbandment of Office of Operations.
- 1967 Foreign Documents Division, responsible for coverage of foreign publications, is transferred to FBIS from CIA's Office of Central Reference and renamed Production Group.

Confidential

- 1968 (b)(1)
(b)(3)(n)
- 1970 First *Daily Reports* go on sale to public.
- 1974 Mediterranean Bureau abandoned because of Turkish invasion of Cyprus.
- 1975 Saigon Bureau abandoned as communist forces approach.
- 1976 FBIS transferred from CIA Directorate of Intelligence to Directorate of Science and Technology; African Bureau closed on request of Nigerian Government.
- 1981 Monitoring of broadcasts from communications satellites begins.
- 1983 Limited electronic word processing introduced at Headquarters.
- 1985 Live foreign TV first supplied to CIA analysts, via satellite.
- 1987 Headquarters moves to Reston (b)(3)(c) in western Fairfax County; new Headquarters information handling system and wideband trans-Atlantic communications system inaugurated (b)(1).
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(b)(3)(n)
- 1991 50th anniversary observed.



FBIS Director R. W. Manners (left), at FBIS 50th anniversary observance on 26 February 1991, with guest Harold N. Graves, Jr., who helped establish the service in 1941 at the age of 26.